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PERFORMANCE-APPRAISAL-RESULTS:
A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO U.S.
OFFICER EVALUATION
STUDY REPORT
PMC 73-1

Robert Bruce Craig Lt Colonel USA

PERFORMANCE-APPRAISAL-RESULTS:

A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO U.S. ARMY OFFICER EVALUATION

An Executive Summary of a Study Report by

Robert Bruce Craig Lt Colonel USA

May 1973

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DEFENSE SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT SCHOOL

STUDY TITLE: PERFORMANCE-APPRAISAL-RESULTS: A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO U.S. ARMY

OFFICER EVALUATION

STUDY PROBLEM/QUESTION: To provide an improved technique that can be used to evaluate the performance of U.S. Army officers, and to establish the requirement for approaching the evaluation process on a systems basis.

STUDY REPORT ABSTRACT:

The U.S. Army officer evaluation system relies principally upon the efficiency report as a tool in managing the career development of each officer. The overall system is not fully accepted by the officer corps, and Department of the Army studies indicate a strong need to improve on both the short and long range goals of the system. This study takes one of the newer personnel management methods, that of performance analysis - management by objectives, and outlines its usefulness as an evaluation technique. Performance analysis is shown to provide improved communications between superior and subordinate, a systematic means of charting performance progress, a means of motivating the subordinate toward improved performance, a positive impact on the evaluation review, and as a major innovation in the total appraisal process of treating the evaluation as a system rather than discretely.

KEY WORDS: PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION MOTIVATION

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Robert Bruce Craig, LtCol, USA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Army Officer Efficiency Report, part of the officer evaluation system, is the single most important document in the management of an officer's career. The report, its use and the evaluation system in general, have been developed over many years of research and yet comprise a system that is less than desireable. Why? In attempting to address this question, recognizing the magnitude of the task, this study developed into an analysis of the officer efficiency report as a personnel management tool in appraising performance. No attempt was made, because of time constraints, to relate the other important aspects of rater subjectivity, standardization, trend analysis, career impact, or development.

In looking at the use of the efficiency report as a career management tool, a foundation was first laid for the requirement or need of an evaluation system. Accepting this need or "why", the evaluation of the U.S. Army Officer Efficiency Report is developed and the usefulness of the report as a personnel management tool is highlighted.

Setting aside the U.S. Army system, the study next looks at various types of performance appraisals used in industry and business institutions. Classical methods are briefly described and newer methods outlined. Within the newer methods of personnel evaluation, the technique of performance analysis is shown to have potential for application to the present evaluation system. This technique involves establishing targets, goals, and objectives by mutual agreement between the subordi-

nate and his superior. These objectives, once established, are used as a means of measuring the performance of the subordinate. In contrast to the present system, the technique of performance analysis provides an early, mutually acceptable, supervisor-subordinate agreement on goals or targets that the subordinate will work to accomplish during a specified period. This list is prepared by the subordinate or rated officer, discussed with the superior or rating officer, revised by mutual consent and is then used as the basis for the rated officer's evaluation. Time increments less than the full rating period are used to evaluate the officer's performance. A brief case study is offered as a means of interpreting the usefulness of the technique.

It is shown that use of this technique can be a motivator for the subordinate. Given general guidance with which to plan his object lives, the subordinate must look ahead to what objectives he wishes to accomplish; he then accepts a "contract" to meet these objectives, and is responsible for the success or failure in accomplishing what was set out to be done.

With this means of evaluation, there is no longer a requirement for the rating officer to use some "other" as an artifical standard in comparing the officer's performance. This technique is shown to take the sting out of evaluation review criticism by having the subordinate critique himself. In addition, this method has the added value of focusing on future objectives and allowing for "personal windage" corrections in arriving at new goals for the succeeding periods.

Within the current system of rating officers, this technique coupled

with performance counseling or job coaching, is shown to be a powerful tool in the hands of the supervisor to effectively manage the subordinate. It provides an accurate measure of the individual's performance from which potential can be more accurately derived. This technique can now be applied under existing regulation guidelines.

In conclusion, the usefulness of performance analysis is unique in that it provides for a systems approach to personnel evaluation. It considers the motivation of the individual as a major objective of the appraisal and with proper counseling or coaching provides for a more complete and systematic approach to rendering what is the single most important report in an officer's career. The study focuses on the report only so far as it comprises a portion of the total evaluation process, and should be viewed as a component of the total evaluation system. Inherent in this approach is the desire to inquire into the possibilities of finding a "better way".

PERFORMANCE-APPRAISAL-RESULTS:

A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO U.S. ARMY OFFICER EVALUATION

STUDY REPORT

Presented to the Faculty

of the

Defense Systems Management School

in Partial Fulfilment of the

Program Management Course

Class 73-1

by

Robert Bruce Craig Lt Colonel USA

May 1973

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PREFACE

Personnel appraisals or efficiency reports are commonly referred to in the military as the "report card." This system of individual evaluation evokes continual discussion, emotional outburts, speculation, distrust, and everlasting criticism. How can a system that has been developed over so many years, with such major emphasis, be that controversial?

The U.S Military, and particularly the U.S Army, has spent thousands of man-years in the field of improving personnel efficiency reports and it still has a system that is less than desirable. Why? Is any system in which an individual must "play God" and rate or appraise another ever successful? Perhaps not. Individuals are basically adverse to and embarassed at officially judging others. Those being judged feel ill at ease and are also often embarassed at the result, — be it good or bad. How then can the requirement for measuring a subordinate's efficiency be made more realistic, less distasteful and far more effective? The objective of this study is to offer a better way.

This study represents the views, conclusions, and recommendations of the author and does not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the Defense Systems Management School nor the Department of Defense.

INTRODUCTION

"It is not so much that The Organization is going to push the individual around more than it used to. It is that it is becoming increasingly hard for the individual to figure out when he is being pushed around....

What are the standards by which one should judge whether he is cooperating or surrendering? One wrong turn can destroy all that has gone before; but how do you know then it has come?" \(^1\)

Thus Wilbur H. Whyte in his "Organization Man" sets the stage for the question of personnel performance. Performance in the eyes of the supervisor or performance in the eyes of the employee to use a trite comparison - is like beauty, it is in the eyes of the beholder.

The purpose of this study is to inquire into the basis of the U.S. Army performance evaluation as it relates specifically to the officer personnel management system. For the purpose of clarification during the succeeding passages, personnel appraisals, evaluations, and efficiency reports will be considered as interchangeable in their meaning and use. The individual differences between the governmental and industrial use of each will be discussed in limited detail during the succeeding chapters.

This is a limited study. Time and resources not withstanding, performance appraisal systems are many and varied throughout the government, academic and industrial worlds. The U.S. Army system, as a basis for comparison was an easy choice. It is the one I know best.

This study will first develop the "why" and "what" of performance

^{1.} William H. Whyte, The Organization Man (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), p. 42.

appraisal. It will then outline the U.S. Army concept of appraisals. Next, it will jump over the fence into some of the newer methods of performance evaluation used in industry and the subject of research in the behavioral sciences. Relative merits will be discussed. Lastly, using ideas from research and management theory, a proposed system appraisal for the Army will be outlined. This outline will stress the need to consider personnel appraisals in the complete context of an evaluation "system", with input and output, all pointing towards meeting the goals of an improved officer personnel evaluation system.

CHAPTER 1

THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL: REQUIREMENTS, USE, AND TYPES

Are performance appraisals necessary? The purpose of this question is to introduce the appraisal in its macro aspects and to establish the appraisal as the heart of any personnel evaluation system. After addressing the "why", the internal or micro aspects will be surveyed. This survey will include a review of the various types and methods used in evaluating employee performance and the analysis and results that may be obtained from appraisal use.

We are continually appraised throughout our life in many ways. From the diaper days until it is off to school, our performance is evaluated within a reasonably clear cut set of standards. In our early years, obedience, behavior, and respect are considered positive in nature; soiled pants, tantrums, and broken windows are definitely negative. As we move from childhood into adolescence, we learn to engage in various forms of physical competition. Performance evaluation in this manner takes on a more practical form and can be measured quite easily. "It was a great game, Mom, but we lost." Additionally, we learn to appreciate the traditional appraisal called a report card, be it pass or fail, A through F. Though not always easy for the teachers, parents can quickly understand this fundamental form of appraisal.

ARE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL SYSTEMS NECESSARY?

Progress to adulthood by the individual becomes more difficult.

That first job is a real eye-opener into realizing who gets hired, fired, and promoted. One begins to develop standards of self appraisal and often wishes that the supervisors we work for would do likewise. Here is where the important aspects of interpersonnel relationships begin to form and the personal judgments as to our efficiency begin to take on more meaning. In the higher levels of organizational management, the inspiring individual begins to develop goals and a means of measuring achievement. Insistence on high goals and high performance requires that a man's ability to set these goals and to attain them be systematically appraised.²

The evaluation of one man by another is as basic as life itself. A fundamental concept of our form of government - that being all men are created equal, with equal opportunities, is misleading as all men do not perform equally well under similar conditions in the time allowed. In the industrial sense, the survival and growth of a business enterprise depends upon evaluation of new material, the finished product, its production standards, market, and manufacturing methods—all effecting its profitability. The fact that the payroll makes up over half of the expenses of most firms, including the Department of Defense, makes the efficient management of the employees' time on the job essential. Performance appraisal is therefore the tool by which this important resource is shown to be efficiently managed.

The major size of many businesses and today's governmental agencies dictates some form of any employee evaluation system. On the other end of the organizational spectrum, the small business man has little

^{2.} Peter F. Drucker, The Practice of Management (New York: Harper and Row, 1954), p. 149.

^{3.} Ray A. Killian, Managers Must Lead (New York: American Management Associate, 1966), p. 195.

difficulty in appraising his few employees. This latter individual is in eyeball contact with his subordinates and a formalized appraisal system for him would be a waste of time. As the size of the organization increases, however, there is less and less personal consideration of individuals. For example, salesmen are away from the home office for extended periods of time; personnel in the service industry are usually working throughout a large geographical area; military personnel are frequently reassigned and are seldom confined to one area but for a relatively short period. No longer can the vast majority of supervisors in these example organization promote, hire, and fire. Personnel management functions are centralized and usually at some distance from the actual work site. How then can the pros, cons, character traits, performance, and accomplishments of an employee be measured? Some form of appraisal is required.

In answering the basic question that was asked in the beginning, are appraisal systems necessary, the answer is quite logically yes. As to why, we can see it as a means to motivate the individual, provide a measure of his accomplishments, and to a large degree "separate the men from the boys." Douglas McGregor, in his article, "An Uneasy Look at Performance Appraisals," states that the appraisal is used to meet three needs; one for the organization and two for the individual. For the organization, it provides systematic judgement to back up salary increases, promotions, transfers, and sometimes terminations. For the individual, it first is a means of telling him how he is doing in his behavior, attitude, skill, knowledge, and "where he stands with the boss." Second, and rather new, it is used as a basis for the coaching

and counseling of the individual by his supervisor.⁴ It is these last two very important features of the performance appraisal that the remainder of this study will build upon.

As to the internal aspects of its use, the performance appraisal can be divided into three general categories; administration, information, and motivation. Administration is primarily the use for salary determination, promotions, transfers, education, demotions (non-military), and personnel terminations. The appraisal is usually composed of a letter or form that is structured to quantify the results of performance, strengths, weaknesses, and personal characteristics. Effort is made to discriminate between accepted levels of performance. Appraisal reports were at one time the complete responsibility of the supervisor; though this remains generally true, some appraisals now include second and third levels of indorsement or review. Innovative approaches in the form of group appraisals and peer ratings have been brought into play. Some organizations are even experimenting with subordinate appraisals wherein the employee rates the boss.

Quite controversial is the informational use of performance appraisals. Information used in this context means showing to the individual, or discussing with him, the results of the evaluation. Here the spectrum ranges from extreme secrecy to an open and frank discussion. It is characteristic of people that they find it difficult to hear and accept criticism. Good news to an individual is welcome; critical judgement, however, can generate defensiveness. It may be said that acceptance of criticism is inversely proportional to the need

Douglas McGregor, "An Uneasy Look at Performance Appraisals," Harvard Business Review, May - June 1957, p. 71.

of the individual to accept it.

Without information on how the supervisor views an employee's performance, the individual has no possible way with which to correct faults. This has been overcome in certain organizations through use of performance counseling or job coaching techniques. Here, periodic formal or informal meetings are held between the subordinate and supervisor to discuss problem areas, accomplishments, and performance. Without this feedback, an employee may believe he is the best thing going for his company, that is until someone gets promoted over him.

Use of the evaluation report as direct information to the rated individual is a matter that will always remain controversial. The problem is that most individuals lack the ability to provide an objective evaluation during a face to face encounter. Analysis has shown that reports become more numerically inflated when the rater knows the employee will see the report. An unsatisfactory appraisal, when shown to an employee, may create a personal conflict that only a change of jobs can cure.

The least understood use of an appraisal report is in its motivational use. A common sense assumption is that telling an individual
where he is weak will motivate him to change. This is not necessarily
true unless he accepts the negative judgement and agrees with it. Here
time is critical. Criticism or praise for an event weeks or months
old will do little to motivate. How then can a periodic evaluation
motivate? That is a fundamental problem capable of solution only
through practice, experience, and a strong sense of understanding for
the individual on the part of the manager.

Traditional forms or methods of performance appraisal are basically the graphic rating scale, checklist, paired comparison, or ranking styles. Newer appraisals have taken the form of the forced choice, critical incident, and performance analysis methods. Much attention has been recently given to the latter. It will suffice for the purpose here to give but a brief outline of each of the above methods.

GRAPHIC RATING SCALE: Most commonly used, this method uses a line or scale on which the rater indicates the degree to which he believes an individual possesses a trait or characteristic. A problem here is that each trait or characteristic is often given equal weight.

CHECKLIST: Simple and descriptive, the rater merely places a check in the yes, no, or other category alongside each descriptive statement. It is an easy rating to interpret; standardization between jobs is quite difficult, however.

PAIRED COMPARISON: This involves comparing each individual with all others in a group, against all considerations listed. Very lengthy and time consuming, this type is usually limited to overall job performance rather than individual characteristics.

<u>RANKING</u>: Here the rater arranges his subordinates in order of rank, from best to worst. This method is easy to interpret but fails to take into account the degree of separation between individuals.

FORCED CHOICE: Adopted early in the U.S. Army officer evaluation system, but no longer used, statements are listed and checkmarks made against those traits that best describe the individual. The purpose is to eliminate rater bias, through uncertainty of weights. Retaining

validity and the lack of selectivity in statements are, though, considered serious drawbacks to this method.

CRITICAL INCIDENT: Here each employee is considered basically equal with all others except for positive or negative critical incidents. Somewhat time consuming, as each individual must have a separate current record, it does offer a good track record of the employees deeds or misdeeds. Without knowledge and skill in its use, the supervisor may be accused of the "little black book" approach.

PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS: Based principally upon the concept of management by objectives, this requires both the supervisor and employee to establish a clear statement of objectives to be accomplished during a specified time. At the end of the period, the employee returns to compare his accomplishments with the supervisor. Results and short-comings are then discussed. Establishment of revised objectives for the next target period are agreed upon. The supervisor provides an evaluation report based upon the relative success or failures in meeting the established goals. ⁵

Very seldom does any organizational evaluation system use a unique, single method. Combinations of each are preferred. The greater the preparation of the evaluation system by the manager, the better the results. The analysis of performance evaluations is most important, especially when the appraisals are in the form of quantitative ratings; only through means of careful analysis can reliability and validity of the ratings be estimated. The reliability and validity can be improved through studies of the rater's trends. Analysis of job differences, weighting of questions, scoring, relating data to other information,

6. Ibid, p. 279.

^{5.} Herbert J. Chruden, Personnel Management (Cincinnati: South Western Publishing Company, 1968), pp. 270-278.

and determining trends must be accomplished before results can be effectively used.

The results of performance evaluations or appraisals will be most revealing if done carefully. Referring to McGregor's point earlier that the appraisal is used to meet three needs, one for the organization and two for the individual, the properly executed evaluation system will be the principal means to promote, reward, or terminate employees. The system likewise will be beneficial to the employee as a means of charting his personal achievements and progress. Even more it will, if properly constructed, provide a means of coaching the employee to overcome certain deficiencies and inturn could result in his motivation for greater productivity.

CHAPTER 2

THE U.S. ARMY OFFICER EFFICIENCY REPORT SYSTEM

The U.S. Army Officer Efficiency Report System can be traced to General Washington and his early efforts to improve the small Continental Army. The first recorded attempt to report observation on subordinates was, however, made by Brigadier General Lewis Cass in 1813. From this early begining, written reports on subordinates were used but standards or regular procedures were not spelled out until approximately the period beginning with World War I. Procedures developed during the war and refined thereafter were used to develop "Form 67," the same basic form number used today to appraise the performance of all U.S. Army commissioned and warrant officers.

Following World War I, the form and procedures were refined and ratings developed. Communets on the rated officer were included and rating scales averaged to reach overall description. During the 1930's the first trend in inflation of the ratings was observed. The basic report form was by then well known and for that reason well received. However, by World War II, what had started out as a good system of the 20's was no longer serving the purpose for which it was intended.

Following World War II, through scientiific research by the nation's leading behavorial scientists, the evaluation system and its reporting format were changed. This change took on three basic features. First, the form was tried out before implementation; second, a standard type score was obtained from a comparison among officers;

third, the form employed a type forced-choice method for evaluation. Reception by the officer corps of Form 67-1 was unfavorable. Dislikes centered around the unknowns in scores obtained, the rater was required to check off statements that were not complete and meaningful, and there were no provisions for showing the report to the officer.

Resistance by the officer corps continued and a new form was introduced prior to the Korean War. The new form, Form 67-2, was divided into five separate sections. It provided for information to identify the rated officer, rater, indorser, and contained comments by rating and indorsing officers. It also included sections containing scored scales on performance and promotability. An annual numerical index for each officer was thus obtained.

Further work on the evaluation system continued through 1956.

Forms 67-3 and 67-4 came and went with only minor changes. In

Janaury of 1958 work began on 67-5. It was placed into operation by

September of 1961. The newly conceived report was first compared to

similar forms used in industry and used by other U.S. military compo
ments. The annual index was discarded and a general form of mandatory

counseling of the rated officer was instituted. The role of the

reviewing officer, senior to the indorsing officer, was increased and

emphasis placed more on the officer's performance of current duty.

As a means of controlling rater bias, the option of showing the report

to the rated officer was initially denied.

In 1966 an ad hoc committee of the Army began work on 67-6. This report was designed to simplify the work of the rater and indorsing

officers. Less dependence was placed on their writing ability. An attempt was made to provide for "rating the rater", at Department of the Army, by annotating each rater as High, Medium, or Low. This objective was however never realized.

In 1969, the Army completed the first comprehensive study of the overall Officer Efficiency Report System (OERS). Objectives of this study were to determine rating concepts, administrative procedures, automation, rating formats, personnel and cost implications, and areas of study required to support future changes to the system. This study looked into the techniques used by other world power military organizations.

The study developed four principal findings:

- a. There is a lack of confidence by the officer corps in the value and usefulness of the present system.
 - b. The indorsing officer added little substance.
- c. There exists a need for education and training to support the system.
- d. There is a strong requirement for career and performance counseling.

The study concluded that the Officer Efficiency Report System needs:

- a. Organization for acceptance.
- b. Research and development planning for future evolutionary changes.
 - c. Automation support, research, and correlation with other

officer evaluation management tools. 7

During 1970, a study of the total officer personnel management structure was begun. This study, titled, The Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) is still in process of finalization. An initial report was published in June of 1971 for information to the officer corps. As part of the report, short and long range goals were identified. As part of this effort, Form 67-7 was developed for use beginning 1 January 1973. Addressing the evaluation portion, the reports' short range goals were specified to be an initial supervisory system and more automation of selected portions. Few substantive changes in the form itself were made. The long term goals were stated as focusing on reduced dependability of the single report instrument for personnel management and to establish a comprehensive research and development effort towards the goal of restructuring the evaluation, counseling, and personnel selection system by the end of the decade.

The current appraisal form used Army wide for all commissioned and warrant officers has been revised from the basic forced choice type to a composite checklist, narrative description, and preferred ranking type (Appendix A). Personal qualities have been revised to read as professional attributes; the numerical ratings converted to "boxed scores"; and a 70/30 performance to potential numerical weighting arrangement established.

The purpose of the report as outlined in the implementing regulation is to provide for a continuing appraisal of each officer's performance of duty in various assignments as well as an assessment of his

^{7.} U.S. Department of the Army, The Officer Efficiency Reporting System (Washington D.C.: Government Pringting Office, 1969), pp. 1-4-1-13.

^{8.} U.S. Department of the Army, The Officer Personnel Management System (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971).

-15-

potential to discharge duties associated with positions of increased responsibility. The report is indicated as the primary source of information ... necessary for career development. Each officer charged with the responsibility of rating other officers is encouraged to use performance counseling or "coaching" to develop his subordinates, particularly with junior officers. This management technique is used as a means of assisting the rated officer to improve on his or her effectiveness in accordance with defined standards and objectives for job performance. 9

The present Army Officer Efficiency Reporting System is the product of many years of research and development. It remains the basic instrument on which the officer is promoted, advanced in his career field, or released from active duty. It is part of a system that is not equaled in the industrial or academic worlds based upon its size, complexity, and application. The system in its present form has not solved the "numerical inflation" problem, subjectivity in the rating and indorsing officers, lack of continuity in the counseling and coaching phases leading to the make-up of the report, and the motivational impact on the officer receiving the report. This later weakness is perhaps the key to the lack of confidence in the system and one that appears to have been overlooked for some time.

There is currently a beginning effort to investigate better leadership and management techniques in the evaluation of Army personnel at Fort Hood, Texas. Based upon personal experimentation in troop units there, and subsequent interest by Army behavioral scientists, a contract

^{9.} U.S. Department of the Army, Army Regulation 623-105, Personnel Evaluation - Officer Evaluation Reporting System, 26 February 1973 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 1-1.

is to be awarded for further study and research into improved individual motivation through use of the Management By Objectives (MBO) concept. 10 MBO, used in this context, is a process whereby superior and subordinate managers (leaders) of an organization jointly identify goals, define individual areas of responsibility, and use these goals as a means of performance measurement.

Although fundamental in basic Army tactical doctrine, the use of objectives does not now enjoy any significant application in the management of personnel. This technique will be pursued in support of research leading to the all volunteer Army concept. MBO as described in the research contract proposal, is a formalized system that integrates the concept of objective management with the practice of determining organizational and individual objectives per joint supervisor-subordinate agreement. Setting organizational goals, determining measures of acceptable results, defining areas of responsibility, setting goals for individuals, and reviewing results are all integral parts of this technique.

The advantages and disadvantages of initiating this new technique will be explored in the following chapters. It will suffice for now to conclude that the present Army Officer Efficiency Report System could be adapted to a management by objectives technique. A more meaningful evaluation of an individual's performance may be obtained through appraisal of success or failure in meeting previously designated objectives.

^{10.} J. Johns, Private Interview Held in Pentagon (Washington, D.C.: March 1973).

CHAPTER 3

NEWER MANAGEMENT THEORY

Performance appraisal within management ranks has become standard practice in many companies during the past twenty years, and is currently being adopted by many others, often as an important feature of management development programs. The more the method is used, the more uneasy I grow over the stated assumptions which lie behind it. Thus Douglas McGregor offers a challenge to the concept in which personnel are appraised as part of an overall management system.

Up to this point, a foundation has been laid to show the worthiness of appraisals, methods used in appraising, and the elements of the U.S. Army officer evaluation system. From the fundamentals to the applied, a range in types or methods of appraisal techniques was provided but without placing the appraisal itself into the context of an overall system. The newer management approach looks at the evaluation objectives, the rating itself, and the results that form a system. The purpose of this chapter will be to take a look at this newer theory and inquire into its use as part of the officer evaluation system.

As was noted earlier, the objective of an evaluation system is to provide for better personnel management. The evaluation system provides a means of measuring performance. Personnel administrators and leaders at every level are aware that appraisal programs run into resistance from those expected to administer them. The boss's resistance is usually attributed to the following causes: a normal dislike

^{11.} Douglas McGregor, "An Uneasy Look at Performance Appraisal", Harvard Business Review, (May-June 1957), p. 71.

of criticising a subordinate and then having to argue about it; lack of skill needed to handle the interviews; dislike of a new operating procedure with its accompanying changes; mistrust in the validity of the appraisal itself.

Much of the resistance is overcome through experience and training. Managers of the more skilled variety profess a discomfort at having to "play God". This uneasiness is further complicated by the current emphasis on the manager and leader to help his subordinates achieve both individual and organizational objectives. These two features, though somewhat in conflict, show that for the most part managers do have a personal awareness for their employees and an increasing awareness to treat them different than the objective attention one would give in judging the performance of a truck.

The newer look into this problem is not one that applies cosmetics in the form of revised training skills or gadgetry, but rather provides for a bold change in the overall way people are managed. Douglas McGregor offers that the basis for this change lies within the framework of management by objectives. 12

Specifically, the new approach takes the form of reversing part of the traditional superior-subordinate role. The subordinate begins with establishing short term goals for himself; the boss enters into the process only to insure the goals are realistic and complement the overall organizational goals. The specific division of responsibilities can be divided as follows:

a. First, the subordinate individually develops a concise job

^{12.} Ibid, p. 7.

statement, including the definition of his broad areas of responsibility.

- b. Next, the supervisor, with the subordinate, review the statement and together they modify it to their mutual satisfaction.
- c. Following this joint effort and using the statement, the subordinate develops target goals, objectives or tasks to be accomplished within a given period of time.
- d. These target goals, objectives and tasks, are then revised between the two participants and if necessary modified to suit their mutual satisfaction.
- e. At the end of the reporting period, the subordinate makes his own appraisal of accomplishments relative to his original targets. The whys and why nots are documented, and during an evaluation interview, the subordinate and superior review the accomplishments. It is important to note here that some of the detriments of the other evaluation techniques can thus be eliminated. No theoritical comparisons between subordinates is made. The employee can be rated on job accomplishments that both he and his boss have previously agreed upon. A most important feature!
- f. The last feature of the interview is the resetting of targets and objectives for the next period. Within the scope of the job, this gives the boss a fine tool in raising or lowering standards that will bring out the features of promotability and potential rather than having to judge against some artifical yardstick.

It should go without saying, but for those that may be concerned by this technique, the boss retains his veto power at each decision point.

This newer approach, briefly discussed in Chapter 2, as performance analysis, is in essence a shift from appraisal to analysis, with a parallel shift of greater responsibility to the employee. Under this concept the subordinate takes an active role in establishing his own measure of success; no longer can failure be blamed on those "guys up there".

This technique is not easy to apply in that it requires future planning and thought, something that many individuals find difficult. The employee must as an individual set objectives and plan for their accomplishment. Failures must be accepted with a personal sense of responsibility rather that allowing the blame to fall elsewhere. The ability to live with real self criticism is not easy. Overall, the real reward is in accomplishing the intended goals.

This technique also can be a decided improvement in the performance of the supervisor. In establishing individual targets, the overall objectives of the organization must be retained and supported. This could cause the supervisor to inquire further into what his organizational goals are. Leading the subordinate through this thought process could cause also the supervisor to rethink his own objectives and goals. Most instrumental, however, is that the sting is removed from the evaluation interview by this technique. Rather than placing the subordinate's faults on the table, criticising performance subjectively, and "playing God", the supervisor can act more as a counselor with the ability to critique both good and bad, based upon the employee's

^{13. &}lt;u>Ibid</u>, p. 74.

earlier evaluation. As a sidelight, but possible under such an approach, the supervisor might have the employees provide a draft appraisal on himself, as a basis for the boss's official submission.

Another aspect of this approach is that it maintains a focus on the future. 14 The employee's achievements can be used as the means for determinine the next series of targets and the degree of responsibility for each. Past performance, hits or misses, became sunk costs, and the individual is required to look forward to the next upcoming objective. This is not to say that some over-the-shoulder looks might not help in avoiding problems, but with goals strung out over a period of time, there will be less tendency to sit down and become interspective on what has taken place.

This approach has yet another positive factor in that it can focus more on performance and less on personality. The method of management by objectives may be used with career or non-career employees, young or old. Setting of realistic and related targets, goals, and objectives is all that is required.

Up to this point, only the positive aspects of this approach have been addressed. Under these somewhat reversed roles, there will be a greater strain on both employee and supervisor. For some employees, planning ahead in detail may pose a psychological hurdle. Many employees are content to drift along in various ways with others organizing their daily lives. Having to set objectives and live by them will be difficult. For this type of individual, management by objectives and the resultant manner of evaluation may not be in their best interest. For the

^{14.} Ibid, p. 76.

supervisor who has obtained his position through a series of strong convictions that he knows best for his employees, this will be very unsettling. He may view this technique as a abrogation of authority and responsibility and as an overall breakdown in his control. For this style of manager, using this technique could pose a great dilemma.

Lastly, this method is not obtained without cost; additional time is required to pursue this method. Time, however, spent early in the formulation of the employee's goals can be expected to provide for savings of time later. This amount of time can be viewed as an investment in human resources to accomplish the overall objectives of the organization.

This new concept is not limited to any one individual, organization, or type structure. It can be applied in every manner of organization. In the next chapter, the possible applications of this technique in the evaluation of U.S. Army officers, both within the current system and as the basis for future revision to the present OERS will be outlined.

CHAPTER 4

A BETTER WAY

Most managers and leaders feel that appraisals do not focus on performance, but rather on the personality of the worker. To overcome this form of subjectivity a new approach is warranted. This approach could most reasonably take two directions. First, in that a new system for evaluation of officers has just been established, the short term approach should live within the present regulation guidelines. A review of the current regulation reveals that as long as the administrative procedures are followed, there is a latitude in the approach each officer can take with regard to evaluation. Second, is the long term approach. In concert with the findings of the 1969 OERS study and the stated long term goals of OPMS, a comprehensive research and development effort should be taken toward the goal of restructuring evaluation, counseling, and personnel selections. This rather distant goal is not only very worthwhile but may well assist to establish confidence in the evaluation system amongst the officer corps.

SHORT RANGE APPROACH

Prior to discussing any modifications or changes it is important

During the period of research for the development of this study, the results of a parallel effort were published in the November-December 1972 issue of Personnel Administration and Public Personnel Review. The article, "A Systems Approach to Results Oriented Performance Evaluation", by Robert G. Pajer was both informative and thought provoking. Mr. Pajer has since left the N.J. Department of Labor and Industry and as of this date has not been available for further comment.

to note that an evaluation system is an integral part of the total overall personnel management structure. Performance evaluation itself can be looked on as a subsystem or objectives, goals, and purpose; objectives here being immediate of short range events to be achieved within a definite period of time, budget, manpower supply, and location; goals being intermediate results a system must achieve to fulfill its purpose; and purpose as the ultimate result that a system is intended to accomplish. 15

There is common agreement to expect more belt tightening within the military during the next several years. Under the conditions of reduced manpower and budgets, it is even more urgent that we have a system for promoting performers and retaining those personnel that are results oriented. The approach to problem solving will take on many interesting twists, but one that is becoming ever more significant is the relative importance of the individual and the value placed on his performance. A prime example of this is the impact of the volunteer Army concept on the Army and its sister services.

To study possible short range modifications to the U.S. Army
Officer Efficiency Report System, job performance, the evaluation interview, and system results will be addressed within the framework of a battalion organization structure. Although applicable to other organizations, this is a basic unit of interest to most military readers.

Not addressed will be the interpersonal relationships between military and civilian supervisors and subordinates. Though somewhat different than the military unit, all of the techniques to be addressed herein

^{15.} Robert G. Pajer, "A Systems Approach to Results Oriented Performance Evaluation." Personnel Administration and Public Personnel Review, November - December 1972, p. 43.

could be applied to this structure within the comparable Civil Service evaluation system.

Within the battalion structure there is a wide latitude of possible evaluation techniques, personalities, and objectives. Traditionally, the military has been recognized and often cited for being overly performance oriented and not wishing to let political consequences interfere with military objectives. It is therefore well within the content of overall military doctrine to use management by objectives or performance analysis. Even under the severe post Vietnam reductions, the Army strength in officers and warrant officers is now approximately 100,000. The effective management of an evaluation system for an executive force this size can be seen as a task of major portion.

Earlier it was noted that historically the evaluation system has not been fully trusted by the officer corps. Undoubtedly its size has had an impact on this uncertainty. However, in the competitive world we live in, part of the problem has been our rating in relation to some "other". This "other" has been fictional in nature and part of a statisticians model. It is therefore important in looking at the evaluation system to inquire as to how the efficiency of an officer can best be measured.

Certainly the concept of the previous chapter on performance analysis - management by objectives is worthy of consideration. Within the battalion, the opportunities are great to outline targets, goals and objectives, for both commanders and staff officers. Mission, training, administration, maintenance, and supply can all be divided into individual

efforts that go into making up the big picture. A word of caution here, this technique could easily get off track by using this method to set "unit" rather than "personal" goals. This must be avoided within the context of the personnel evaluation system.

Consider for example yourself in the position of a battalion commander and just welcoming a new company commander to the unit. The customary initial interview would be one of getting acquainted, giving the new officer a quick summary of the battalion's activities covering mission, organization, personnel, and operational structure. During the discussion you ask the new officer, Captain B, to prepare for you, as part of getting acquainted with the company, a concise statement of what his job will entail and a definition of his principal responsibilities. You ask that he return to discuss these in several days.

"Good afternoon Captain B, please be seated. How is the breakingin period coming along?"

"Fine Sir, lots of work to be done, but I'm now beginning to get a feel for my job and the men. I know you are busy, Sir, so I have written out for you the statement of the job and what I believe are my principal responsibilities. Here you are."

"Thanks Captain. Let me study this for a minute."

You look over what he has written, see that he has all those that you feel are the major tasks, but find he has overlooked the provision for security in his part of the installation.

"Lokks fine, except for one area. I don't see where you indicate security responsibilities for your unit area. Did I miss it?"

"No, Sir. I was not aware that it was our responsibility. I was told the security was rotated among the other company size units on the post."

"No, Captain, according to the latest installation commander's memo, and the battalion's instructions, it's yours."

"Very well, Sir. I'll add it and return the revision to you by 1700 hours. Anything else, Sir?"

"Yes there is. I would like to try something new. In line with your job and responsibility, I want you to make up a list of objectives and goals you can reasonably expect to accomplish within the next six months. Take about a week, come on back and we will discuss them. I want you to give priority to organization of the company for the upcoming training tests, outline what you intend to accomplish in raising the vehicle maintenance standards, and actions to get all of your men proficiency tests. I want you to understand that when we both agree to the objectives, I intend to use these as a means of rating your performance. Any questions?"

"No, Sir. I will have it for you in a week."

"Fine, see you at the Hail and Farewell tonite."

Here you assisted in suggesting a significant change to his responsibilities that was inadvertently omitted, outlined your approach to using performance analysis in determining his evaluation, and learned quickly his ability to grasp the details of his new job. Within a week Captain B. returns.

"Good morning, Sir."

"Good morning, John. What's the problem?"

"No problems, Sir, I have those objectives you wanted to go over with me. Here is my first cut."

"Fine, John. Sit down while I look over this."

Your first glance shows quite an impressive list. Training test build up, target dates for reducing the deadline rates on vehicles, testing dates for each speciality group, company inspections, unit athletics, road marches, redecoration of the lounge, and others are all identified with dates. You really turned this tiger on, but is that what you wanted?

"John, that's an impressive list. You have actually added a lot more to this list than I had in mind. And though you are the C.O., some of these objectives are outside of your personal ability to really succeed at. You may be laying everything on the line for some job that possibly could not be done. Take for example your goal of not more than a 2% unit deadline rate within 30 days. If I can figure right, that will only cover your "S" services. What about parts deadline?"

"Colonel, I believe I can beat the 10% goal with no sweat, and I admit that I was a little optimistic on that 2%. How about a compromise at 5%?"

"Ok, John. I agree. Now, those you have listed from number eight on appear to be more unit objectives and quite possibly something I want to give more thought to. How about agreeing to the first seven for now? Then as we both learn more, we can expand or revise the others accordingly."

"Fine, Sir."

"Ok then, here is a list for you and I'll keep the other. Looks like you and the company have some work to do."

Again certain adjustments were made to the initial suggested list of objectives and goals, mainly to guarantee a reasonable list of items and also to help you keep these in line with the other objectives within the battalion. This really caused you to do more thinking than at any other similar occasion before. By now you have had several opportunities to observe Captain B's approach to the command, you have been able to correct potential problems that might not have come to your attention, and just possibly you have gotten him off to a better start.

Time goes by quickly and before long those six months are up. You have had other opportunities to observe Captain B and his unit perform under a variety of circumstances, met his family, and believe he has the makings of a good commander. According to your earlier discussion, Captain B knows he must provide for you his own appraisal of the accomplishment or failure for each task and be prepared to go over the next six month's objectives.

"Good morning, Sir."

"Morning, John, come on in. How about a cup of coffee before we go over the evaluation?"

"Thanks, Sir, but not for now."

The evaluation interview is a key factor in using the technique of performance analysis. Here a rush to get the interview over, biting criticism, confrontation or an unconcerned air would destroy the rap-

port or communication that is a must for this technique. The time and date should have been picked so that there will be a minimum of distractors. Making the subordinate feel that this is his show and you are there only as a "coach" is the optimum condition.

"OK, John, give me a run down on those seven tasks we agreed on last May."

Captain B then begins with a systematic presentation, informal but concise, as to what he was able to accomplish, what he had not yet completed, and what were some of the mitigating circumstances. You injected questions where certain things were not clear, agreed with him on points and disagreed on others. On the whole it was a fine beginning and the openness with which Captain B presented his accomplishments and miscues impressed upon you that he took to this form of evaluation.

"That's fine, John. I believe you have made an excellent start and now have a better feel for the job and yourself as a leader."

"You're right, Sir. I admit that I entered into this experiment with some misgivings. I have been brought up to charge ahead making adjustments as I went, and the thought of looking ahead up to six months, saying I could do something, and then having to live with the decision was not so easy. I do think it is a good technique, and if you don't mind my stealing your idea, I'm going to try it out on my platoon leaders."

"That's great, John. Be my guest. I don't guarantee results, but give it a try anyway. I have learned something too! OK, now, what do the next six months look like?"

And so with the first hurdle past, you work out with Captain B his objectives and goals for the next six months. Now you have the experience to adjust his objectives up or down. Call it "personal windage" or whatever, you now have a reasonably good feeling for what his capabilities are and another six months will give you everything you need to really give him a good evaluation. Over the next period you can apply some pressure in the form of more difficult tasks to see his reaction and to give you an indication of his potential for serving on the battalion staff.

You are pleased that at least on his first occasion the technique worked. Even more, it turned the young tiger on by giving him some latitude he never expected. "Very interesting ... now let's see ... how will this work with the "3" and the "4"?"

That brief case-let indicates how it might have happened. The same approach could have been used with the other individuals. The key here is performance analysis, with the man and the boss. The system used was basically the organizational structure, with input by Captain B, output in the form of performance, and the subsequent analysis and results providing a communication feedback loop. As noted earlier in the chapter, the rating officer has a large degree of latitude as to the techniques he uses in executing the proper forms. The present regulation, AR 623-105, provides little in the way of specifics for counseling. It defers to DA Pamphlet 600-3, Career Planning for Army Commissioned Officers, for performance counseling techniques. Working within the concept of performance analysis, the description of

duties portion of the report would now become a joint effort by rated and rating officer. Arriving at the value of professional attributes would be easier through contact during the performance counseling sessions. Demonstrated performance of duty would become a logical fallout as a result of the actual accomplishments of the officer, and not in comparison with some fictional "other" standard. Potential, instead of subjective, could be judged from the manner in which goals of increasing magnitude and importance were accomplished. Fulfillment of assignments and performance can be said to be the only true indicators of potential. A noted expert in the field once wrote, appraisals - and the philosophy behind them - are far to much concerned with potential. Potential is synonymous for promise and even if promise is there, it may well go unfulfilled. All one can measure is performance and performance of a man can only be made against specific performance expectations. 16

In summary, the current form and implementing regulation allow for use of performance analysis techniques. Establishing objectives and measuring performance against these objectives can be effectively used to reduce rater subjectivity and yet still effectively measure an individual's performance. The process can be organized on a systems basis that looks at the appraisal as a complete process with performance, evaluation, and results part of the total personnel management function.

^{16.} Peter F. Drucker, The Effective Executive (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 86.

LONG RANGE APPROACH

As was noted previously, the era of the individual is upon us and "what makes Johnny work" is now more significant than ever. In looking at the evaluation system overall, as it relates to the individual, we see it take on two aspects; first as a development tool and second as a constraint device. Development is achieved from an awareness of strengths and weaknesses that result from analysis; constraints come about from highlighting weaknesses in performance and can preclude the individual from competing for more responsible jobs and educational opportunities. The greater the use toward development rather than constraint, the more satisfaction of the need for self-actualization is enhanced.

The long term goals for revision of the total evaluation system must account for the current list of personal dissatisfiers. Some of the most important ones are the mistrust in the use of the efficiency report as part of the overall system, subjectivity and arbitrary attitude of the rater and indorser, lack of criteria against which an individual's performance is measured, detrimental effects of a poor report, lack of evaluation consistency, and overall use of the OER as the sole basis for career management. Effort is underway to correct a portion of this; some can be corrected via information, education, and training. Others can not.

Two principal features appear prime candidates for further research leading to inclusion into the evaluation system. These are

management of personnel by performance analysis and a sound counseling or coaching program. Research should focus on the levels and degree of sophistication to be used, guidelines for use, evaluation interviews, and results analysis.

Performance analysis will require field testing prior to any overall acceptance. This form of "particitative management" will be viewed by many old hands as a weakening of control and a breakdown in discipline. Possibly so - possibly not. Control as mentioned earlier will pose a dilemma to the leader that has been trained and has grown to use his authority or rank to lead. Allowing the subordinate to establish his own objectives would have the appearance of endangering his superior position and be construed as loss of control. How far can I relax the strings of command? Is this not an abrogation of my responsibilities? Only an understanding of the technique at each level in the structure will provide a reasonable guarantee of success. Once tried and found successful, the superior may well determine that he has not lost control, but in fact gained ability to influence a greater range of productive actions.

Considering performance analysis to be sound for further study, guidelines for the development of levels of accountability must be established. Before performance can be measured, the accountability for performance must be agreed to. One consideration is the use of four accountable levels: first, remote, this is informational or routine service used by others in taking actions; second, contributary, that being interpretation or advisory for use by others in taking action; third, shared, that of working with others - peers, in taking

action; fourth, primary, the actual controlling the end result.

Performance standards in themselves will not be a cure-all. Their limitations must be also be recognized. Still required will be judgemental standards, consideration of employee characteristics, and recognizing supporting personality traits. The performance standard and analysis does not allow for a better objective means of measurement, even considering the individual traits of the employee. However, the final answer in performance evaluation is the degree of contribution made by the employee to the unit's objectives and goals.

Still basically a void in the evaluation system and the second prime candidate for long term solution is the personnel coaching program. The performance counseling workshop research by Army scientists and additional contract research at Fort Hood, Texas is a first step in this direction. Additional guidance in the form of an Army regulation on performance coaching has been set aside until more is learned from the workshop research.

Suggested changes must be made in the manner with which the officer now receives his evaluation report. Even the present means of "providing a copy" falls short of the best means to use the report for developmental purposes. Procedures should be researched whereby the report is made part of the performance counseling or coaching session without it becoming a personal confontation.

Overall, the long term approval to future evaluation systems must be accepted by those it supports. The system should consider on an equal basis the developmental aspects and the constraints. The system should stick to performance criteria and accomplishments and be structured less toward potential; potential will naturally evolve from the results obtained in recording performance at positions of ever increasing importance.

Lastly, the current system, though not perfect, has produced a better officer over the many years since the completion of the first report by General Cass. It is, however, a mark of sound leadership to look to the future and continue to seek a "better way".

For use of this form, see AR 623–105; the proponent agency is The Adjutant General's Office

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SSP Craig, R.B.
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